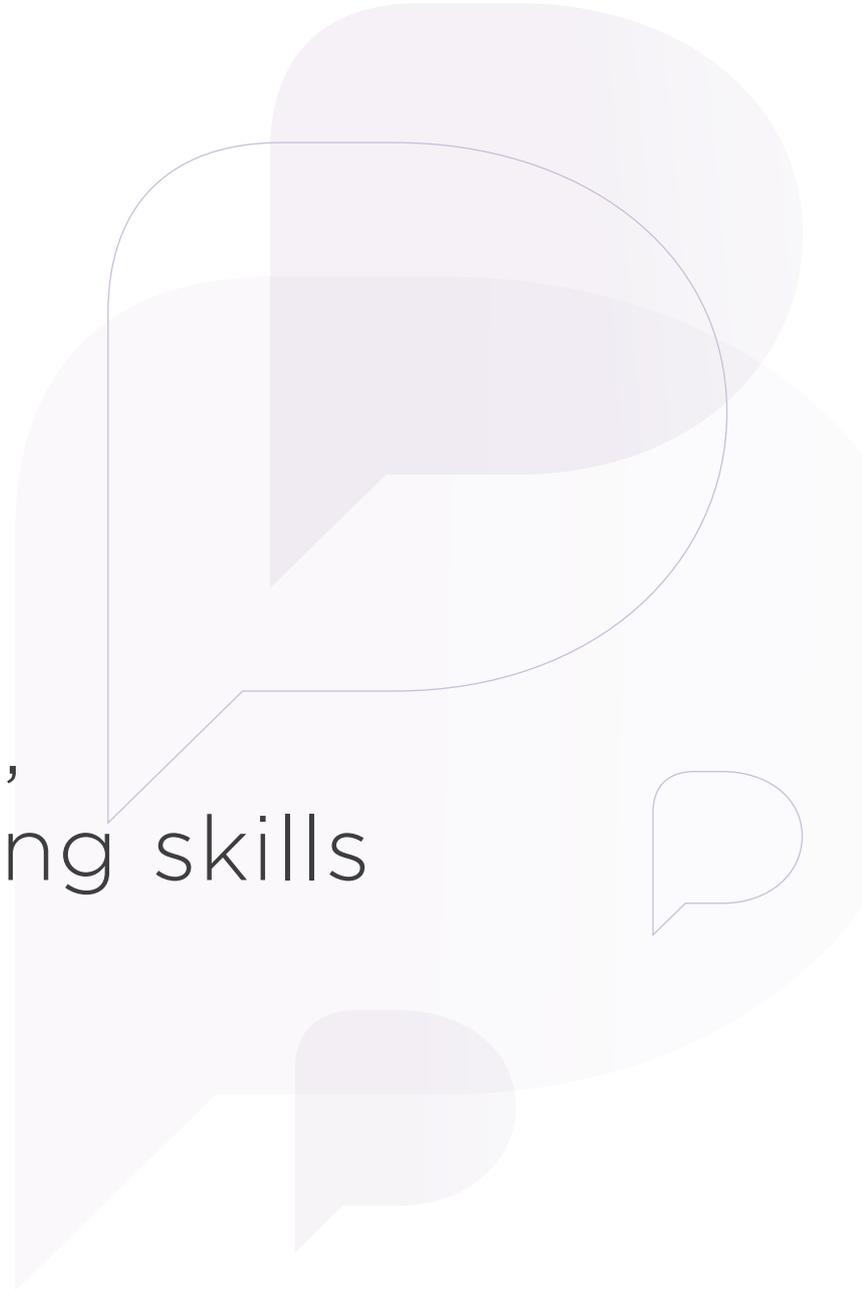


Executive summary

April 2015

L&D: Evolving roles, enhancing skills



The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has more than 135,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

About Towards Maturity

Towards Maturity is a benchmarking research company that provides independent expert advice and support to help organisations modernise learning in order to accelerate business performance. It leverages the data of its in-depth Benchmark Study, the largest learning benchmark in Europe. Since 2003 over 3,500

organisations and 17,000 learners have contributed to Towards Maturity's leading benchmarks. Thanks to the support of Towards Maturity's Ambassadors (27 learning organisations), annual benchmarking findings, case studies and resources are available to download for free at www.towardsmaturity.org

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We also thank the many learning practitioners who have completed the Towards Maturity benchmark since 2003 and in doing so have confidentially contributed to this research report.

Executive summary

Organisations and individuals are operating in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. L&D professionals have a unique role to play in supporting them, but only if we are equipped to operate in the same VUCA world. We need to understand need, respond faster and think beyond the course. But how should L&D roles be organised and L&D professionals be equipped for change?

This research explores the extent to which L&D is changing and draws on benchmarking data from 600 L&D leaders in the Towards Maturity benchmark study, alongside case study research with the following organisations:

- Barnardo's
- Mattel
- McDonald's UK
- MOD
- PwC
- University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust.

This research demonstrates that mature practice within the top-performing L&D teams leads to significant business benefits. Change is possible, but we need to expand it beyond a minority of organisations and instigate wider movement across the profession. The report explores four key areas to challenge the thinking of the L&D profession – its relationships, roles and responsibilities for the future – and provides a foundation for L&D leaders to drive evidence-based change.

Alignment and resources

- The significant pace of change in the external environment is requiring stronger alignment between L&D activity and business and learner needs.
- Organisations need to maximise the resources they have to enhance effectiveness.
- Limited resources are not necessarily a barrier and can actually help to drive innovation and greater business alignment.
- L&D can operate successfully, whether the function reports to the business or HR, as long as there are clear connections between the different functions and agreement on L&D's purpose.

Evolution of roles

- L&D roles are evolving, but not always at the pace needed.
- There are signs that roles are becoming increasingly multifaceted, with this set to continue in future, necessitating a blend of skills and capabilities.
- In this context agility and versatility are essential, as L&D professionals need to play multiple roles.
- A key shift is a move away from learning delivery to performance consultancy, underpinned by the need for L&D to be aligned to the business and deliver tangible organisational and individual impact.
- There is also increasingly a need for L&D to support social learning.

L&D capability

- In order to maximise resources and evolve roles to best meet business needs, L&D must address key skill gaps.

- These primarily include business and commercial understanding, facilitation of social learning and technological capability, alongside skills that enable robust diagnosis and the development or curation of the right solutions.
- Forward-thinking L&D teams are realising that in order to impact the business, they must first invest in their own capability.
- Methods used to develop skills range from formal development programmes to mentoring and informal knowledge-sharing.

Driving change

- L&D needs to continue to evolve and adapt in response to key drivers of change in the external environment.
- Actively scanning the horizon to anticipate change should therefore be a key priority for L&D professionals.
- But understanding how wider changes may influence L&D requires greater analytical capability to use and interpret evidence and data.
- Insight gathered can be used to help make decisions about L&D resources, the focus of roles and which skills are developed. It can also be used as a tool to engage others in L&D change.

Ultimately, to thrive as an L&D profession, we need to evolve roles and enhance skills to drive organisational performance. This requires action from every L&D practitioner, to build capability in your function and gain stakeholder commitment for learning transformation.



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